

## ACQUISITION COUNCIL MEETING NOTES

**May 18, 2005**

**9:30 to 1:00**

Location: Herbert C. Hoover Building, Washington, DC

Attendees:	<b>Members</b>	<b>Advisors</b>	<b>Other Representatives</b>
	Mike Sade, DOC PE, OAMFA	Leslie Andreacs, OAMFA	John Abbott, NOAA
	Mike Anastasio, OAMFA	Debra Young, OAMFA	Marco Barcella, Appian
	Helen Hurcombe, NOAA	Mark Langstein, OGC	Nancy Barrere, OAMFA
	Phyllis Bower, NIST	L. Desmukes, OSDDBU	Virna Evans, OAMFA
		Chris Makris	Crystal Davis, OAMFA
			Tom Cochran, OAMFA
			Greg Crider, OAMFA
			Gary Hill, CACI
			Keli Stillwagan, OAMFA
			Lorenzo Ariyo-Lewis, ASI
			George Ralis, OSDDBU
			Fred Kopatich, OGC/CLD

**Members Absent:** Page Etzel, PTO  
Mike Palensky, Census

### WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Mike Sade welcomed attendees. Given the many items on today's agenda, Mike indicated Mike Anastasio would deliver his presentation on implementing the Case for Change in CAS at the next meeting. He also noted Mike Palensky was unable to attend due to special Census acquisition issues.

Mike indicated we are here today to share what we are doing, help each other, and leverage whatever makes sense to make us more productive. We are all struggling with more work, fewer people and must work "smarter" to streamline the way we buy and support the mission. In the interest of being good "business brokers," Mike is going to recommend that a Commodity Council be formed to assess where we can get maximum efficiencies. Some possible product lines include Wireless and Desktop. He suggests we need to put a tool in the hands of the front line they can easily access and obtain with the purchase card.

### BPO (NIST AND NOAA) UPDATES ON CASE FOR CHANGE

Phyllis Bower and Helen Hurcombe provided excellent overviews of what NIST and NOAA are doing to implement the Case for Change. Their presentations addressed: What their bureaus are doing to convert to a performance-based environment by bridging the skill gap, customer partnering, private industry partnering, and the use of best practices and outreach, especially COR outreach; how, in creating a performance based organization, they are employing feedback through the balanced scorecard, portal and best practices postings, and participating in acquisition forums; how they are using resources to realign staff and/or workload, employing centers of excellence, enterprising licensing, integrated solutions teams, managing culture change and leveraging technology, and; finally, what they are facing in moving their organizations forward. Acquisition trend data was also provided but not discussed. Copies of their presentations are attached.

After the presentations, Mike suggested there should be consistency and the same acquisition message between the political level and bureau senior managers. Perhaps NIST could run through what they're using with Mary Mozingo.

NIST senior management has procurement planning as an element in their performance plans this year that that's really starting to making a difference. They are starting to recognize the importance of planning, market research, and funding plans. NOAA, has incorporated spend planning in their managers performance plans, which thanks to the top management's enforcement, is adding a new level of interest. Mike asked to see the language NIST and NOAA are using for possible corporate use. NIST has also reduced its number of suppliers (e.g., fewer unique office furniture buys) and will work with OSDDBU to identify what the reduction in number of suppliers was, by NAICS, and compare the socio-economic accomplishments from before to after the reduction.

There was discussion about human capital and the grave state of the acquisition workforce within Commerce and across government. A significant percentage of us are eligible to retiring within the next 5 years (maybe 40%) and at NOAA it's closer to 50%. We are all chasing after the same diminished (and shrinking) labor pool and it is increasingly difficult to find good candidates at any level. NIST does a lot of recruiting and uses the outstanding scholars program (OSP) NOAA and main Commerce have not had access to the OSP. Given NIST's experience, NOAA and OAMFA will respectively check with their HR folks to see why it is unavailable to them if NIST can use it. The DOI Acquisition Intern program DOC supports turns out good candidates with real world training--but only a small number. Mike has come to the conclusion that we need to "grow our own" people.

There was a Firedrill and HCHC was evacuated. The meeting resumed a half an hour later.

Mike reminded folks he will visit each bureau (as mentioned earlier) over the next couple of months. Helen is having a May 24<sup>th</sup> "All-Hands" teleconference at 1PM in the Admiral's conference room and Patti Stang will talk about COMMITS. Helen noted NOAA has an 8(a) contract for conference planning services if we need it. Leslie provided a quick CAPPS update. There will be no summer DOC procurement conference; instead there will be a Fall CO/COR Conference; we are working on how to implement OFPP's Workforce Letter; Virna has been meeting with each bureau and has given the Workforce Assessment Database (WAD) demo to all but NOAA, which is currently being scheduled. The WAD demo was dropped from today's agenda due to time constraints. For the remaining time, Mike asked to see the SAM demo and the CSTARS product.

## **DEMO OF NOAA's STRATEGIC ACQUISITION MANAGEMENT (SAM) MODULE**

John Abbott demonstrated NOAA's Strategic Acquisition Management (SAM) Module. Marco Barcello, from Appian, was present as well. SAM is a web-based acquisition planning system that tracks the "raw need" to contract award. It gives visibility into pending acquisitions for planning budgets and acquisition workloads. Functional components include: advanced acquisition process; collaborative tools; dashboards; reports; user access control and security; and NOAA specific policies and data. Benefits include establishing accountability among staff and expectations among customers; improving PALT through performance management by the ability to monitor time to complete milestone steps; and allowing line offices to better manage their spending by the ability to monitor plans and relationships to goals, object classes, money type. SAM appears to be populated with NOAA PALT times; can import Excel data.

## **DEMO OF CACI CSTARS ACQUISITION PLANNING MODULE**

Gary Hill of CACI demonstrated CACI's CSTARS acquisition planning module, a module within the Comprizon.buy/CSTARS suite. The module, which is currently available for use within the current CSTARS, can run in the current client-server environment as well as a web-based environment. Gary showed how CSTARS currently provides the same functionality that has been developed using SAM. Benefits include early availability of acquisition planning utilizing our current enterprise-wide acquisition system and integration with key acquisition milestones (no re-keying of data). NIST noted that they are currently using this feature within CSTARS for major acquisitions.

CASD was prepared to present an alternative analysis which included objectives, alternatives, functionality, costs, risks, and recommendations for various acquisition planning systems. Due to many agenda items, time was running low. Mike asked contractors to leave the room so the Council could discuss the 2 systems. Phyllis noted that NIST is already using the acquisition planning module within CSTARS. In considering the acquisition planning system, Mike stressed considerations of impact to front line, interface and cost. Mike would like to see a business case to determine which system is right at the enterprise level. A requirements team is needed to look at both systems and possibly others. The team should include Jim Taylor's office. A core team should be established to work together to assess needs and recommend the best solution. What we don't want is each bureau going off on its own. Mike questioned if either of the systems received OGC or OSDDBU input? It is needed. Mike asked Debra to take the lead to pull together an appropriate team to undertake this effort. A month or so from now, Mike would like the Council to come back and discuss the results.

Meeting time expired. Agenda items not addressed at this meeting include updates on the Electronic Subcontracting System, Interagency Acquisitions, Demo of Workforce Assessment Database, and the Obligation and Standard Requisition Interface.

***ACTION ITEMS:***

- *Phyllis Bower and Helen Hurcombe were asked to forward to Mike Sade NIST and NOAA performance plan language*
- *Debra Young was asked to pull together a requirements team to look at both systems (and possibly others) and draft a business case to determine which is right at the enterprise level*
- *The Acquisition Council is to return in a month to complete the agenda and discuss efforts of requirements team*

**DISCUSSION AND WRAP UP**

The next Acquisition Council meeting is tentatively being scheduled for June. CAS, Census, PTO, OGC, and OSDDBU should be prepared to present what they are doing to implement the Case for Change.

Today's meeting concluded at 1:00pm.

**ATTACHMENTS: NIST AND NOAA CASE FOR CHANGE IMPLEMENTATION UPDATES**